

1391

(b) (1)
(b) (3)

FILM PER C/CIA LIBRARY

FILM PER C/CIA LIBRARY

~~Top Secret~~

CIA/CPAS --- NID 92-283JX ---



APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAR 2004

GRAPHIC MATERIAL
MAY NOT REPRODUCE CLEARLY

~~Top Secret~~

CPAS NID 92-283JX

5 December 1992

DS
26

~~Top Secret~~**Contents****Notes****In Brief**

10

Special Analyses**North Korea: Returning to a Hard Line**

14

~~Top Secret~~

5 December 1992

~~Top Secret~~

Special Analysis

NORTH KOREA: Returning to a Hard Line

P'yongyang is reverting to an antagonistic approach toward South Korea and other international players, suggesting that it is prepared to suspend contacts and perhaps even to return to violence. []

[] policymakers in North Korea differ over dealings with the outside world; [] P'yongyang's behavior would indicate that those who favor a more accommodating approach have had a key influence on policy in the past year. Last December, P'yongyang concluded unprecedented agreements with Seoul on exchanges and reconciliation and on restriction of nuclear activity on the Peninsula. In the spring, the North implemented an IAEA safeguards agreement and opened its major nuclear facilities to international inspection. Later, the North Koreans made several positive gestures toward Washington, including returning 30 sets of US war remains. During the first half of the year, the North also held several rounds of normalization talks with Japan. []

Whatever the degree of unity in P'yongyang, the arguments for this approach almost certainly included the prospects of such tangible benefits as improved diplomatic relations with the US, its West European allies, and Japan to balance Seoul's growing ties to Beijing and Moscow and help alleviate the isolation caused by the collapse of Communism elsewhere. Those advocating this approach probably also hoped it would eventually lead to expanded economic cooperation with Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo to help revive the North's ailing economy and reduced military tension on the Peninsula, perhaps encouraging Washington to resume troop withdrawals and end Team Spirit and other joint military exercises with the South. []

North Korea's failure to assuage international concern about its nuclear program, however, has forestalled these payoffs. Economic assistance and the improvement of relations remain hostage to implementation of bilateral nuclear inspections, and planning for Team Spirit 1993 is under way. Moreover, the expanded North-South dialogue has made it harder for the regime to motivate the populace. []

Taking a Tougher Approach

Early last month the Foreign Ministry suggested that P'yongyang might refuse to permit further IAEA inspections unless plans for next year's Team Spirit exercise are scrapped []

continued

~~Top Secret~~

~~Top Secret~~
[redacted]

In addition, P'yongyang has recently postponed several meetings with Seoul and has threatened to suspend the entire dialogue if the exercise is held. Press reports say North Korean delegates to nuclear talks with Seoul last month said the level of tension between North and South was as high as "on the eve of a war." Moreover, early last month P'yongyang walked out of normalization talks with Japan. [redacted]

North Korea's about-face could be a ploy to gain concessions from Seoul on bilateral inspections and to block the resumption of Team Spirit; the two are to hold another round of talks on nuclear issues Thursday. At a minimum, P'yongyang may intend to stall the dialogue until it can assess a new administration in Seoul after the 18 December presidential election. On the other hand, the current approach may mean that hardliners in P'yongyang have reversed what they consider a bankrupt policy. [redacted]

Outlook

If P'yongyang has made a strategic decision to take a hard line, it may follow through and freeze the inter-Korean dialogue and further limit cooperation with the IAEA. It—and Seoul—may see the meeting on Thursday as part of an effort to avoid blame if their dialogue collapses. North Korea might also disrupt the operations of the UN Military Armistice Commission, for example, by refusing to attend working-level meetings. An increase in tension and a siege mentality in P'yongyang could increase the possibility for North Korean miscalculation and overreaction to external events. In such an environment, P'yongyang might even risk a terrorist act or a provocation along the demilitarized zone. [redacted] [redacted]

~~Top Secret~~
[redacted]